NOTES ON SOME BRITISH CURCULIO SPP. (COL.). – The occurrence of the rather scarce and pretty little *Curculio rubidus* Gyll. in the eastern suburbs of London during the present century seems not to be well established up to now. Fowler (1891, *Col. Brit. Isl.*, 5: 386) cites Forest Hill and a statement by Champion that it is "not uncommon in the London district"; but it is clear from what follows that this latter refers to places in Surrey well outside the metropolis, and in any case all these are 19th-century records. Moreover, the species is not included at all in the Victoria County History list of Coleoptera of Kent (Fowler, 1908). There is, however, a record for Shooters Hill and Lee (in this district) by W. West, in 'Woolwich Surveys' (1909) – the only one for Kent that I have seen, although *C. rubidus* is not really rare in the county. In the eastern division I have met with it once or twice singly in Ham Street Woods; in the western, at Darenth Wood likewise – on the last occasion there, 7.ix.63, one each of the present species and *C. betulae* Steph. were taken off birch in the same sweep of the net. In the year after moving to Charlton (1974) I was pleased to come across a few examples of *rubidus* by sweeping under trees on two of the grassy slopes in Maryon Wilson Park there, in August; I have seen none since, but have made no special search. One was at a little distance from a birch, while two others were near oak, ash, and black poplar. This is not far from Shooters Hill where West took it long ago, and where I have collected on many occasions but have found, so far, only the more common oak-feeding species *C. venosus* Grav., *glandium* Marsh., and *pyrrhoceras* Marsh.

C. betulae, supposedly scarcer than *rubidus*, seems also to be little known in Kent; the VCH list gives only Plumstead (S. Stevens), but I have taken it two or three times singly at Darenth and Ham Street Woods, and its actual range and incidence in the county appears very similar to that of its close ally. The late Dr. A. M. Massee once told me that *betulae* could best be found high up on the outer shoots of fairly young birches.

The polyphagy attributed to this species is somewhat remarkable. As a larval pabulum, the developing fruits or catkins of alder are doubtless not too dissimilar to those of birch, nor are young fruits of sloe to those of cherry; but *between* these two pairs of development-media the difference is surely considerable. Hansen (1965, *Danm. Faun.* 69: 318) gives all four as hosts but alder as the principal one in Denmark – birch being exceptional, whereas in Britain it is by far the most usual (as with *C. rubidus*). And that is not all: Reitter (1916, *Faun. Germ.*, 5: 189) adds *Quercus* and *Salix cinerea* (the latter also for *rubidus*)! His inclusion of sallow is of interest in lending some plausibility to my tentative association of both species at times with *Populus* (Allen, 1947, *Ent. mon. Mag.*, 83. 127, and see above under *C. rubidus*); compare further the common little black *C. pyrrhoceras* which seems to fluctuate in its host-choice between oak and willow, again geographically; e.g. the former in Britain, the latter in Denmark. Possibly, however, confusion with the very similar *C. salicivorus* Payk. may sometimes have occurred. In any case polyphagy is much less surprising with

these smaller species of the genus (s. *Balanobius* Jekel) whose larvae develop in leaf-galls as opposed to fruits.

In contrast, the larger species of *Curculio* are virtually monophagous; where a secondary host is alleged to exist it is probably based on adult straying, as when oak and hazel, for instance, grow close together. It is noteworthy that a middle-sized oak-feeding species, *villosus* F., develops in the familiar 'oak-apple' galls, and not in acorns like *venosus* and *glandium* – a fact not, I think, noticed in British works. Biologically, therefore, it belongs with the *Balanobius* group, whilst in other respects a typical *Curculio* s. str. (=*Balaninus*). I should perhaps mention in passing that the very distinctive *C. (Balanobius) crux* F., which lives on *Salix*, is common on much of the Continent and would be expected to occur in Britain.

I cannot agree with Fowler's estimate (*l.c.sup.* 385) that *C. glandium* (= *turbatus* Gyll.) is 'not common'; I have always found it at least as commonly as *C. venosus*, if not more so. The two often occur together on the same oaks, and I have had *glandium* on the tray in plenty off one tree at Windsor, accompanied by a few *venosus*. The former is notable also for its great variation in size, some specimens being but little larger than *betulae* which they rather resemble. On the other hand *nucum* L. and *venosus*, from what I have seen, vary hardly at all in that regard. All three of these larger species are, normally, easy to discriminate in the field, each having its own characteristic facies not readily described.

I have taken all eight British species of *Curculio* at Darenth Wood, W. Kent, which classic locality is now sorely in need of protection. – A. A. ALLEN.

EULYPE HASTATA L.: ARGENT AND SABLE FEEDING AT BLUEBELLS (ENDYMION NONSCRIPTUS). – R. South in his *Moths of the British Isles*, Vol. II states of this moth – "It flies in the afternoon sunshine around and over birch trees, and occasionally alights on the leaves", and my experience of the insect in Southern England is in accord with this description. However, on May 25th, 1952, at Broadwater Forest, Sussex, later to be despoiled by the Forestry Commission, I saw about a dozen specimens most of which were feeding at bluebells far past their prime. Aphides were not in evidence on the flowers, and I suspect the moths were imbibing some product caused by bacterial activity rather than upon nectar. I have not observed *E. hastata* feeding at flowers on other occasions, nor have I seen any reference to such behaviour. – B. K. WEST, 36 Briar Road, Bexley, Kent.

AN EARLY RED ADMIRAL. – In warm sunshine this morning, my wife and I watched a *Vanessa atalanta* L. sunning itself by the roadside in Holmesley Enclosure in the New Forest. In view of the recent very cold spell it seems likely that this was one that managed to hibernate. In spite of there being a light SW wind, the insect had none of the urgency of an immigrant about it. – E. H. WILD, 7, Abbots Close, Highcliffe, Christchurch, Dorset, 31.i.1982.